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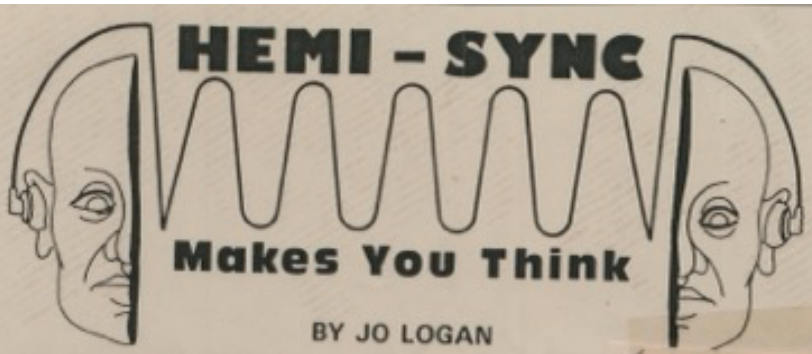
HEMI-SYNC



Makes You Think

BY JO LOGAN

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I've just returned from a fun weekend in Newmarket. If you think this not a very remarkable statement you'd be wrong, especially if I add that the time was spent learning how to get both hemispheres of my brain functioning in synchronisation (hence, Hemi-Sync!). After all, that sounds a far too serious objective to have been fun, yet it was.

The idea behind Hemi-Sync is the recognised fact that we do not use our brains to anything like their full capacity and, worse still, one side of the brain tends to function independently from the other. So, the theory goes, if a method could be devised that would somehow enable both sides of the brain to act and work in unison rather than separately we would be able to tap into at least some of the enormous potential which, under normal circumstances, remains undeveloped and under utilised.

An educational and research establishment in the United States, the Monroe Institute of Applied Sciences, has developed a simple but effective programme – Gateway – for doing just that. But, before going into details, I'd better explain the principles involved.

Scientific research into brain/mind function has expanded greatly during the last 30 years, particularly the last ten or so, and we now know much more about the way in which our brains operate. The left hemisphere of the brain, or left brain as it is called, is logical and analytical, it processes information sequentially, so its basic function is structured thought. Conversely, the right brain operates intuitively, unconsciously, thus it is the site of instinct, emotion, imagery and imagination.

We also know that there are different states of consciousness, ranging from alert wakefulness to deep sleep, and that these can be identified by using an EEG to measure the brainwave patterns. It is possible, using various techniques such as meditation, hypnosis, bio-feedback etc, to alter these states of consciousness and, with training, to achieve the desired state.

Hemi-Sync, which is perhaps most closely allied to biofeedback techniques, is another such training process. It involves the use of sound pulses to induce a specific FFR (Frequency Following Response) in the brain. This is achieved quite simply by introducing separate sonic signals into each ear, using stereo headphones to isolate one ear from the other, so that the two halves of the brain must act in unison to 'hear' a third signal, the 'difference' between the two introduced sounds, and thus generate the desired wave pattern. Most importantly, the state of consciousness thus attained can be learned and, when necessary, recreated from memory.

This is the object of the Gateway Voyager Programs which have been running successfully in the States for several years but until now have not been available elsewhere. I was fortunate enough to participate in the 1st UK Gateway which took place at Severals House Conference Centre, a small country house with a modern, purpose-built residential block in the grounds. The weekend workshop started at 4 p.m. on the Friday, ended Sunday evening and was very intensive.

On arrival participants were greeted by the UK co-ordinator, Mickey Keen, and two Institute-trained tutors, David Mulvey (USA) and Harald Wessbecher (W Germany). After an introductory meeting explaining the techniques involved, background data on Robert Monroe and the Institute plus a general discussion of the participants' aims or expectations, we enjoyed a superb dinner, then it was down to work.

Basically, the course consisted of a series of training tapes followed by discussion, questions, answers and non-taped exercises. Each tape comprised a complex series of masked audio signals synchronised with verbal instructions designed to lead the listener from deep relaxation to the threshold of higher consciousness (or, if you prefer, sonically induced ASCs) in carefully controlled stages.

With what result, you may ask. Well, at the most mundane level, participants achieve a complete state of relaxation in an astonishingly short time. Improved sleep patterns, heightened mental clarity, quicker responses, keener memory, deeper understanding and self-realisation, expanded awareness and a sense of well-being are other reported effects. Out-of-the-body experiences are also a common consequence of the tape exercises, though these are by no means guaranteed as results will vary according to the aims, aspirations and attitude of the individual.

But, whatever the case, it would be impossible not to gain in some way and several things impressed me about the course.

Firstly, it was extremely well planned and organised, with particularly supportive tutors and good back-up literature. Secondly, the complete lack of dogma came as a refreshing surprise although, in my case at least, it did lead to some amusement as it entailed the careful use of 'impartial' expressions such as REBAL (Resonant Energy Balloon) to describe the term aural. Lastly, the ultimate objective of the programme is to be able to achieve ASCs without the use of the tapes, so it is truly a learning process rather than a mere commercial exercise.

This does not of course mean that the workshops are free, in fact the weekender costs £180 and the next one is scheduled to take place at the same venue from August 2nd-4th. This may sound quite expensive but if you consider that it includes full accommodation, really first-class meals, sympathetic tutoring and six Discovery tapes, it represents good value for money.

At the very least, you can enjoy a physically relaxing, mentally stimulating weekend break in pleasant surroundings with the added bonus of six learning tapes to use at a later date. If interested in the August workshop, contact Mickey Keen of Mentronics Systems (UK) Ltd, 10 Hatter St, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1LZ or telephone (0284) 706414.

I found the Gateway stimulating and would be saddened to think that anyone who could benefit should miss the opportunity. So it is with extreme pleasure that I am able to announce that the Discovery tapes already mentioned are now available in the UK at £38.50 all inclusive only from Mentronics at the above address. The special 6-pack comes complete with instructions which should be followed strictly as it is essential to listen to the tapes in sequence. I do hope you enjoy the experience as much as I did.